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Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women: implementation of strategic objectives and action in the critical areas of concern

Statement submitted by the International Federation of Settlements and Neighbourhood Centres, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 26 July 1996.

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The International Federation of Settlements and Neighbourhood Centres (IFS) is a coalition of national, regional and local non-profit social service organizations. Its membership consists of over 4,500 multi-purpose community organizations operating in 44 countries.

IFS is deeply concerned with the implementation of the Platform for Action adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women. The present session's focus on four key women's human rights sections of the Platform for Action are all areas of direct concern and involvement to IFS. Settlement Houses and Neighbourhood Centres have service programmes for survivors of violence, including domestic violence. In the arena of armed conflict a number of our centres have programmes for migrants and refugees. Social and economic human rights of women are addressed through social advocacy and political empowerment programmes. Many of our social service programmes are specifically designed to meet the needs of girl children and their families. All of our member agencies work with those most in need, providing a full range of education, vocational training, child-care and counselling services.

* E/CN.6/1998/1 and Corr.1.

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The Expert Group Meeting: Promoting Women's Enjoyment of their Economic and Social Rights, which took place in Finland, 1-4 December 1997, was of particular importance and value to IFS. This group emphasized that "every person should be entitled to participate in, contribute to and enjoy cultural, economic, political and social development. In many cases women and girls suffer discrimination in the allocation of economic and social resources. This directly violates their economic, social and cultural rights" (Platform for Action, para. 220). These are exactly the types of inequities that IFS is dedicated to addressing. Both in principle and in action, Settlement Houses and Neighbourhood Centres are geared to enhance cultural, economic, political and social development.